Racing Rules of Sailing

The Call Book for Racing, New Call MR 40

A submission from the Chairman of the Racing Rules Committee,

Proposal

Insert new Match Racing Call MR 40:

CALL MR 40

Rule 19 Room to Pass an Obstruction
Rule 64.1(c) Penalties and Exoneration
Rule C2.4 While tacking or gybing

Question 1

Blue and Yellow are sailing dead directly downwind on starboard tack with Blue clear ahead of Yellow. The boats are heading directly toward an obstruction. Blue gybes to port when she is at the obstruction. While Blue is gybing Yellow has to alter course to avoid a collision. There is a Y-flag. What should the call be?

Answer 1

Penalize Blue.

When Blue gybes she becomes subject to rule 13.2 and must keep clear of Yellow, which she fails to do. Yellow is not obliged to give room until the boats become overlapped and, as Yellow has to take avoiding action before this time, Blue breaks 13.2. Because Blue was not compelled to break rule 13.2, she cannot be exonerated under rule 64.1(c).
Question 2

Would the answer be different if the boats became overlapped before Blue gybed?

Answer 2

No - Penalize Blue
Before the boats become overlapped, Blue has right of way and can choose to pass the obstruction on either side.
As soon as the boats become overlapped, Yellow acquires right of way and now she may choose to pass the obstruction on either side.
When the boats become overlapped Yellow is required by rule 19.2(b) to give room. However, when Blue continues to bear away and gybes, she takes away Yellow’s options permitted in rule 19.2(a) and breaks either rule 11 or rule 13.2. Rule 15 does not apply to Yellow as she acquired right of way because of Blue’s action.
By continuing to bear away, breaking either rule 11 or 13.2, Blue compels Yellow to break rule 19. Yellow is exonerated for that breach under 64.1(c).

Question 3

When Yellow establishes an overlap, Blue luffs and passes the obstruction on her port side. What should the call be?
**Answer 3**

If when Yellow establishes the overlap Blue is not yet passing the continuing obstruction and is able to give room but does not, penalize Blue under rule 19.2(b). However, if the overlap is established when Blue is passing the continuing obstruction and there is not room for Yellow to pass between Blue and the obstruction, penalize Yellow under rule 19.2(c).

**Current Position**

This is currently ISAF Rapid Response Match Racing Call 2009.004, edited as indicated.

**Reason**

To provide consistent application of the rules in situations where boats approach an obstruction at a right angle. Such situations commonly occur in match race pre-starts.